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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this writing sampler is to provide teachers and students with student work representing each of the rubric score points for the stand alone writing prompt on the 1998 Delaware Student Testing Program. The student papers included in this document are part of the anchor sets created by Delaware teachers in June of 1998. Each student paper in the sampler includes a commentary explaining the reasoning for the assigned score point. Suggestions that might improve student writing are also included. (RS)

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ED 482 940

Spring 1998

DELAWARE

STUDENT TESTING PROGRAM

ITEM SAMPLER

WRITING

STAND ALONE PROMPTS

Grades 3, 5, 8, and 10

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CS 510 798

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1998 Writing Stand Alone Prompt
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this writing sampler is to provide teachers and students with student work representing each of the rubric score points for the stand alone prompt on the 1998 Delaware Student Testing Program. The student papers included in this document are part of the anchor sets created by Delaware teachers in June of 1998.

An anchor set is a collection of scored student work "anchored" to each of the score points on the Delaware writing rubric. Each paper in the anchor set represents a consensus of thinking by the teacher committee that scored it. Completed anchor sets are used by Harcourt to train the scorers that score the Delaware student papers.

Each student paper in the sampler includes a commentary explaining the reasoning for the assigned score point. Suggestions that might improve the student writing are also included.

DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt

Your school is having a writing contest about people who are special. A special person might be a friend, a relative, a teacher, or someone else.

Write your paper for the contest telling who this person is and why he/she is special to you.

Thinking about the following will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **Who are some people who are special to you?**
- **Who is the <u>one</u> person you will write about for the contest?**
- **Why did you choose this person?**
- **In what ways is this person special to you?**

GRADE 3 – Commentaries for Writing

Score Point 1

♡From ♡

FINAL DRAFT

My Brothers Brandon, Andre, and Many.
Because They can do lots of trickes
you will be amaes because even I
Be. Thery very cute and Haysome.
They got New close, New shoes, New coats
And New clone. My Hole Famliy can
Fit good to so you better Wath out
Well this is the END of My
Big Story. Good By!!!!!

May 6, 1998

♡

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- work on developing a more effective introduction and closing
- look for places to expand and elaborate ideas
- work on sentence structure and eliminating errors in standard written English

Comments:

This brief response is minimally developed and lacks organization. There is no clear introduction or closing although an attempt to address the prompt is evident. The reasons listed are never elaborated ("They can do lots of trickes." "Thery very cute and haysome.") Frequent and severe errors in sentence structure and in standard written English interfere with understanding.

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Score Point 2

My best freind Zack

FINAL DRAFT

Me and Zack are best freinds. We do alot of things togetiher. We like to play Mario Kart 64 together. We ride over bike ramps with our bikes. Sometimes we race. We even crash bikes. The thing we like doing most is playing Mario Kart 64. We sometimes play legos. We do all kinds of things together. We spend the night over eachothers house. When we spend the night we sneak snacks. We like to rollerblade with eachother. We have alot of fun together. Sometimes we play super Mario 64 together. We play all kinds of games together. We even play Goosebumps. We like to jump on the trampoline.

The End

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- work on a more effective introduction and closing
- look for places to expand and elaborate ideas (example: "Mario Kart 64" could be further developed)
- work on ways to vary sentence length (too many short, choppy sentences)

Comments:

In addition to having only the rudimentary elements of an introduction and closing, this response lacks unity and transition. The repetitive sentence structure lacks variety ("We like... ," "We do... ," "We have... "). Ideas are listed and repeated rather than developed.

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Score Point 3

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- work on expanding some of the details with greater elaboration (examples: "I also like to do the work she gives me." "She takes us on trips.")
- work on developing more precise word choice

Comments:

This writing represents a clear progression of ideas with a focused introduction but a less developed closing. Good sentence variety is evident and some specific details are developed (examples: brain stretchers idea and the paper cut explanation). The lack of vivid word choice and the listing near the end confirm the score of 3.

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Mrs. _____ is very special person to me. She is very special to me because if she was not a teacher I would not be in this classroom. Mrs. _____ teaches me things I don't know. When I am stuck on something she will help me. She is a super teacher. If I get cut and it is just a little cut like a paper cut she will put a band aid on the cut. Then it will make me feel better If she didn't do that all kinds of bacteria would get in it When we get done doing a lot of work she sometimes reads to us. She reads very loud and clear. She also reads very good books. She puts Brain Stretchers up on the board for me to think about. Sometimes they are kind of hard, but sometimes they are kind of easy. Every day she takes us out to recess if it is not raining and if it is raining we play inside we like it when she takes us out to recess. She gives me work. I also like to do the work she gives me. She is almost like one of my moms. She takes her time and does things with us. She does lots of activities with us. Like she takes us on trips. When I have problems she listens to me. She is a great person and I hope she stays that way.

Score Point 4

My Dad

FINAL DRAFT

This is a story about someone who is special to me. The person who I am going to write about is my Dad. One reason that I'm writing about my Dad is because he helps me. He helps me carry things like heavy tables and other heavy objects. My Dad also helps me lite a fire in the fire place. He helps me by lighting a match for me. When were having pasta for dinner he opens the bag face me if I can't get it. Then I pour the noodles into the boiling hot pot. Next my Dad helps me get things that are up high. He helps me get bowls and cereal boxes up in the cabinets.

Another reason that my dad is special is that he teaches me things That I don't know. He taught me how to play sports. My dad was the first one who taught me how to shoot a basket ball. I felt very good when I made my first basket. He also taught me how to hit a base ball. After a while I was one of the best hitters on the block. The next thing my dad taught me was to ice skate. My dad told me to push off with the back foot and glide. While I was gliding I suddenly fell onto my bottom. My Dad thought it was funny but I didn't. The next thing he taught me was how to ride a two wheeler bike. First he taught me how to keep my balance. The next thing he would do was to push me and then let go. I thought I had it until I fell on my bottom. My father laughed again. He was laughing even harder then at the ice rink. Finally I said "lets go in." Once again my Dad laughed. He laughed all the way in. That night I thought I heard my Dad laughing in his sleep.

The third reason why my Dad is special to me is because he spends time with me when I have nothing to do. Usualy I come up and ask if he says "no" Then I say "pleeeeeaaaaase" soon he just can't take it any more and he plays with me. We usualy play hockey and I'm the goalie. Most of the time I make more saves the he makes goals. Sometimes he's in goal. He screams me. Now that I play base ball my father and I have a catch. If it's a nice day we go up to Lancashire and he pitches me some. I laughed at him when I hit it into the out field. Another game me and my dad play is football. I get the ball from the garage and we have a catch. We play for half an hour and then we go inside and get a drink. The last game me and my Dad play is basket ball. Sometimes my Dad and I go one on one. He usualy beats me but sometimes I beat him. Thats why I think my dad is a special person.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- work on strengthening the closing
- work on proofreading skills

Comments:

This well-developed and organized response has a strong introduction, a focused body, and a closing. Smooth, effective transitions help effectively move the piece along. Details are fully elaborated with an attempt at dialogue ("Let's go in." "If he says 'no' then I say 'pleeeeeaaaase'"). A distinctive style entertains the reader ("That night I thought I heard my Dad laughing in his sleep." "Once again... ").

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Score Point 5

I have a lot of special people in my life. My friends, relatives, teachers, and neighbors are all special to me. A very special person in my life, is my sister Laura. She is special to me in many ways.

The first reason Laura is special to me is because when I am bored, Laura plays games with me. One time when it was raining and I was sick, she made a comfy spot for me on the couch and pretended I was a queen. She danced around the room and pretended she was my servant. Laura keeps me smiling even when I am sad or lonely. I can't help smiling when she is around!

Another reason she is special to me is that she is in sixth grade, and she teaches me things I don't know. The other day she taught me some eighth grade algebra. She is in a higher grade level because she is very smart. Laura taught me how to write the perimeter of a square in letters and numbers. Those letters get me very confused! When she teaches me things I get smarter like her.

The last reason my sister is so special is because she is a good role model for me. She is very pretty, smart, funny, and polite. If I acted like her I would probably be the best kid in the world. She looks like a movie star, is always learning new things, always cracks a good joke, and almost never breaks a rule for politeness. I would give her four stars! Being her sister makes me feel great and have a lot of friends.

In conclusion, Laura is the best friend and sister a kid could ever have. She plays with, teaches me new things and is a great role model. Being around Laura makes me feel good. That is why Laura, my sister is a very special person in my life.

Comments:

This exceptionally-well-organized composition has an effective and strong introduction (addresses the prompt) and conclusion. Details are specific and fully elaborated. Paragraph construction is tight and transitions are used effectively. The writer's exceptional awareness of the audience (completely convinces the reader) and a strong, distinctive style are qualities of a 5 score.

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DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt
You have received some money as a gift. Your family says you may spend the money after they have approved your idea. Decide how you want to spend the money. Write a letter to your family to persuade them to approve your idea.

Thinking about the following will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **What are some ideas you have for spending the money?**
- **After thinking about these ideas, what *one* idea are you suggesting?**
- **Why is your idea a good one?**
- **Why might your family not like your idea?**
- **How can you convince them to approve your idea?**

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GRADE 5 – Commentaries for Writing

Score Point 1

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- work on developing a clear focus and a more controlled central idea
- work on sentence formation
- work on frequent and severe errors in standard written English

Dear mom

I will by some close and food and some cup's and by someing for my house and some things to cep me were and i will nee a thing's for School and things for my bedroom and someting for my mother and my father and my sisther.

Comments:

This response lacks organization and unity causing audience confusion. Development is minimal and there is no elaboration of details. Frequent and severe errors in sentence formation and standard written English interfere with understanding.

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Score Point 2

Dear Family,

What I want to spent my money on is a real pet animal. I really do like animals. We can take them for a walk with us.

I think I should get the animals. They could cost $17.00 dollars for a pet dog. But I would still like to have a pet animal.

My idea is a good one because animals are fun to play with. Some dogs can follow you. They can also bite you too.

I don't think they like dogs that much. The dogs bite them. They bark alot. They won't bother them any more.

Now please let me have a pet animal. I really want a pet. That is why I want an animal.

your daughter

Suggestion that might improve student writing:

- work on developing variety in sentence length, structure, and word choice
- unify the piece by incorporating transitions
- revise to eliminate irrelevant details and clarify confusing details

Comments:

This loosely-focused piece has the rudimentary elements of an introduction, body, and closing. An attempt is made at elaborating ideas but confusion results from immature, repetitive word choice and severe errors in standard written English. The lack of sentence variety and cohesiveness between the paragraphs confirms the score of 2.

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Score Point 3

Dear Mom,

I have a stupendous idea for spending the money. We could spend it on a brand new Jeep Cherokee. You always said you wanted a new car. so there you go.

It can carry over 50 items. That means we can carry 10 more things than last time. We could have enough room to bring the dog. We could go camping in the new car. We could travel all over the world in the new car. First we would go to Disney world. Then to Busch gardens.

Now what do you think about my idea for the car. If you agree or disagree you will be their happy or sad. What ever you picked I hope you thank about it. There are so many things in this world but to find them you need a car. to find them.

I know this a good idea and I know you will agree. And it is all thanks to the people with the money. If they were not kind enough to give us money I would not be sitting here right now. So let thank those with the money. Thank you.

Yours truly,

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- work on a more effective and connected closing
- expand on an additional reason for the choice of a car

Comments:

This piece is unified, has a relatively clear progression of ideas, and a strong introduction but a weak and confusing closing. There is some variation in sentence structure and length. The precise word choice ("stupendous") and the elaboration of details in paragraph two coupled with a sense of style ("so there you go") make this a solid 3.

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Score Point 4

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- work on proofreading skills
- work on development of more effecive and varied transitions

Comments:

This well-organized and well-developed piece is supported with interesting details (description of the dog in paragraph two) and elaboration of ideas (responsibilities of a pet owner in paragraph three). The precise and vivid word choice (fetching, snap, chow, stroll) clearly conveys the writer's intent. The writer's consistent sense of style is evident in paragraph four.

May 6, 1998

Dear Mom and Dad,

Remember the $100. Grandma and Grandpa gave me for my birthday. Well, I thought I would spend it on a dog. With the money left, I would be able to get a bed, food and dog toys. You would love a dog.

The dog I would like would be a Golden Retriever. It would be a nice golden coloring with a reddish brown color. It would be a kind dog and wouldn't snap at anyone. He would help us around the house by bringing in the paper and fetching our slippers. Just think about it.

I would make sure the dog has plenty of clean water and chow. When I get home from school I would take him for a stroll around the block. I would give him a bath every weekend. I train him so he is house broken. It would be as easy as pie.

You guys would be able to play with him anytime. He would bring excitement to our house. The bored would be screaming its to exciting in there. I would really think we could get some exciting things in this house.

I know dogs need a lot of attention. I can give it to him. I can train him. I can give him food and water. Only if you will approve of it. Just cogitate it.

Your daughter,

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Score Point 5

Dear Mom,

Now that I'm 13 and it's May 5. (almost my birthday) I was wondering well. Do you remember that money grandpa gave me on my thirteenth birthday? Well I've been thinking and I wanted to know if I could use that money for something. I've always wanted to do. You could go with me and so would Danielle but I would pay. Okay, here it goes, could we go on a trip to New York. Remember, I would pay. (With that money grandpa gave me.) I know you don't like big trips. But this is my dream this is what I have always wanted to do.

Imagine the first thing we would do would be check into the Grand Central Hotel. The doorman would take our things in the golden carrier, up the elevator and into our room. Our room could have an upstairs with the view of the Statue of Liberty.

Then we would be so excited from our trip that we catch a ride on a bike and bugee. It takes us to the Central Park, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and then back to the hotel.

When we are in our room we call a taxi and it takes us to Broadway. There we get three front row tickets to the Sound of Music. The show does'nt start till 7:30 pm so we walk over to the Hard Rock Cafe and eat dinner.

Now Mom, that is'nt it so keep reading. (does'nt it sound like fun so far)

At 7:15 we head back over to the show. Finally the lights dim and it begins. The music is as beautiful as ever and the scenery looks so real. When everyone in the show takes their bow we head over to Central Park to do some night shopping. You buy a new dress and Danielle and I buye a new outfit. For a few minutes we watch the ice skaters skate peacefully as they glide like they are flying over the ice.

After we see the skaters we will go over to the scenery on 31st street then go back to the hotel and sleep peacefully.

I hope you like the trip, mom, and I hope you agree to go because remember it's my dream.

Your Daughter,

PS.
I already made the reservations

PSS.
I will drive

Comments:

This tightly-constructed piece is developed through the use of a unique framework (the dream). The writer's consistent and distinctive style, voice, and tone are attributes of a 5.

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DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt

Your class has decided to bury a time capsule that teenagers will open in the year 2098. (A time capsule is a container which is placed in the ground and opened sometime in the future.) You plan to contribute one item that represents teenage life in 1998.

Write a letter to the teens of 2098 stating what your item is and explaining what this item tells about teenage life in 1998.

Thinking about the following will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **What one item did you choose?**
- **Why did you choose this item?**
- **Why is the item important to teenagers today?**

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Score Point 1

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- look for places to expand and elaborate on details
- work on a more effective and connected introduction and closing
- work on improving standard written English

Dear teenagers of 2098. I want to tell you about Sneakers every teenager have's tite Sneakers. Sneakers like nike and reebok is better then som other Sneakers. And boots. Like Timberland, moutain gear, and lugs are tite to but all the Sneals and boots I was talking about will ran about sitty five dollers to hundred ten dollers so choice raght.

Comments:

Although this response has rudimentary elements of a beginning, middle, and end, the elements lack development. The writer provides few specific details, and these are minimally elaborated. Frequent and severe errors in standard written English (spelling, punctuation, sentence formation) interfere with understanding.

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Score Point 2

May 6, 1998

To. who this may consern,

The year is 1998 and I'm a student in . My class is doing a time capsule project and I put one item in it this item is a newspaper It told us things that went on in the world like the weather, T.V. shows, movie listings, sales in stores, and what jobs are available.

I put this item in there to let you know what it was like and who was the president of the United States of America in 1998. Look over this and find out stuff you never new before.

The newspaper even has pictures that you can see so you can notionly read the newspa you can also just look at pictures. Some pictures are in color and uthes are in black and white.

Your blast from the past fijend

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- look for ways to expand and elaborate details (perhaps development of what could be found in a newspaper)
- work on developing a more effective ending

Comments:

This piece has an introduction but no closing. Development is minimal. There are some specific details although they are insufficient and lack elaboration. There are several kinds of errors in standard written English and sentence structure that confirm the score of 2 (run-on sentence in paragraph one, pronoun case, and multiple misspellings).

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Score Point 3

Dear teenagers of 2098,

By now you must have figured out that this is a time capsule that us, the teens of 1998 have put in the ground for you guys to dig up and open 100 years later. Each one of us has put one item in the capsule. The item that I have put in there is a five dollar bill. This represents a very big portion of a normal teenagers life. Us teens today use money for every thing. We use it to buy CD's (compact disks) to listen to music. We use it for food and to eat at our favorite fast food restaurant. We use it to buy our movie tickets to watch the newest movie that just came out. We use it to buy things we want, like CD's and clothes. We also use it to buy things we need. Things like school supplies and things of that kind. One of the favorite places teens like to go today is the Mall. It is filled with tons of stores and food places. You cannot go to the Mall without buying something.

Most teens today play sports. You can't play sports without equipment. A lot of the time your parents can buy these things for you. On other occasions you have to buy them. As an exemple, I play ice hockey. To play this sport you need money to sign up, and money for equipment. It costs $69@ to sign up and the equipment total comes out to about $400. You need skates, a helmet, a mouth peice, leg pads, padded shorts, shoulder pads, elbow pads, and a stick. Now you see how money is in a teen of 1998's life.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- work on improving the unity of the piece by using more effective transitions and connections (the paragraph on hockey seems isolated; could almost stand alone; needs to be more connected)
- look for opportunities to develop rather than repeat ideas (paragraph on the mall could be expanded)

Comments:

This piece is generally unified, has a clear progression of ideas, and a relatively solid introduction, but the conclusion is minimal. There is variety in both sentence length and structure. The writer attempts to elaborate on the details provided. Errors in standard written English do not interfere with meaning.

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Score Point 4

The item I have chosen to represent the teens of 1998 is my school yearbook. I feel that this item shows a broad perspective of our lives. A yearbook can show, and tell the different attitudes and hobbies of the students body. Overall I have chosen this item because of its wide variety and range of subject matter.

Students and teens of 1998 love to have fun. We do this by playing sports, going to dances, and hanging out with our friends. Yearbooks cover all of these issues and show what we like to do most. It presents team pictures for all team sports, each league and when we have fun. Teenagers one-hundred years in the future may not realize what we did, how we looked, and how we acted. One-hundred years is more than a lifetime for us, but yearbooks last forever. My ideas on this matter also predict that the students in one-hundred years ahead of us will like to see how we dress and fashion our hair. Styles have changed over the centuries from Renaissance to cavemen, to hillbillies, to barbies, to the present day. I don't know what they would come up with for us.

A yearbook shows many styles and fashions because it has individual pictures for everyone in the school. I remember how funny it was looking back at my parents' yearbooks and seeing all the wacky hair styles and odd clothes. I'm sure that the teens of tomorrow will laugh at our pictures as we once did at our forefathers. Yearbooks provide many memories of good and bad, happy and sorrow, and I'm sure you kids of 2098 will feel the emotions too.

This item also shows you how we had fun when we had as teenagers. I don't know how you may be living now, but don't waste these happy days. Your life will just get harder and harder as you grow older. This item shows teenage life by providing numerous pictures of how we lived our life and all of the fun that we had.

Yearbooks are the best way for me to represent all of the fashions, hobbies, and experiences we experienced. This item is the mirror of our lives. It shows us in our ups and downs. Overall in my perspective I feel that a yearbook alone can best represent myself and the entire era of 1998 teenagers. Remember kids in the future will look back at you too. Have fun, and don't waste the glory days.

Suggestion that might improve student writing:

- explore various strategies thus promoting a more distinctive style and voice

Comments:

This writing demonstrates strong overall coherence and unity with smooth transitions and an effective introduction and closing. The writing is tightly constructed with little extraneous material. The writer carefully names and describes details relevant to the topic. The use of precise language clearly conveys the writer's intent ("glory days" and "one hundred years is more than a lifetime for us").

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Score Point 5

Dear Class of 2098,

Hello, students of the future! I was once a student of the same class you are in now. I was assigned to choose on small item that would represent the teenagers of 1998. The item I picked is a mirror. The reason I chose a mirror is because I feel that the teenagers of today are focused on appearance. The mirror is meant to symbolize our generations obsession with looks and to show how looks affect both the individual and the entire generation.

I chose the mirror to show what the teenagers of 1998 think about themselves. Most of us care alot about ourselves. Health and beauty mean alot to us. We want to look good. Looking good makes us feel good about who we are. In turn, we aren't always satisfied with our looks, and often this makes us feel dissatisfied with ourselves. The mirror shows how much value we place on our own outward appearance.

The mirror also shows how our looks affect our relationships with others. Though they won't admit it, most people judge others by thier appearance before getting to know them. The girls and boys of my generation are often afraid of the judgements others will make about them. The mirror represents the great value that the teenagers of 1998 place on the appearance of others.

This appearance trap, this obsession with looks is not character of my generation. I know that it has happened in years past and will most likely, still be going on when you open this time capsule. Even though we have not been the only generation to concentrate so much on the outward appearance, I could not think of a better example for 1998's teens. All of the industries for beauty, health, and clothing products focus on the outward appearance. The magazines we read stress the importance of it. We, as individuals, spend many hours each week "perfecting" our appearance. So, while looking back you might see many things from our generation: cars, televisions, records, and cd players, remember that our generation is not what it appears to be. The most important thing to the teens of this generation is appearance and I chose a mirror to symbolize this.

Yours truely,
A former student

Suggestion that might improve student writing:

- continue work on proofreading skills

Comments:

This 5 is an example of an exceptionally-well-organized structure with a focused opening, strong informative body, and an effective closing. Transitions are subtle and effective. The development is well substantiated by the carefully chosen details that are fully elaborated. The writer's choice of topic demonstrates an awareness of readers' needs and a willingness to take a compositional risk.

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DIRECTIONS

Read the writing prompt in the box below.

Writing Prompt
The county owns some land that it wants to use to benefit the community. What would you advise the county to do with this land? Write a letter to county officials suggesting how the land might be used.

Thinking about the following will help you focus and plan your writing.

- **What are some possible uses for the land?**
- **After thinking about these uses, what *one* use of the land are you suggesting?**
- **What might be some advantages associated with this use?**
- **What might be some disadvantages?**
- **Why is your suggestion a good use of the land?**
- **Why would your proposal be beneficial for the entire community?**

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Score Point 1

To whom it may concern;

I suggest several ideas for use of your land. Some of my ideas include a park, a camp ground, cattle ranch, farm, wildlife conservation, or to keep it the way it is. The farm idea I support the most. Some advantages could be food products. Such as fruit, vegetables, dairy, wheat, and meat. Disadvantages can also occur. Such as a drought, bad crop, or animals eating it. My idea is good for the county as well as the community. With a farm, food would be provided for us to eat.

Thank you for your time!

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- identify the main point and focus on it earlier in the essay
- supply specific and relevant reasons to support main points

Comments:

This Score Point 1 example consists predominantly of a list of possible uses for the land. By the time the author settles into a focus (the farm), the reader is confused and disinterested. The few specific details are irrelevant and not elaborated. Lack of sentence variety and sentence fragments ("Such as fruit, vegetable, dairy, wheat, and meat." and "Such as a drought, bad crop, or animals eating it.") confirms the score of 1.

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Score Point 2

To who it may concern:

I have learn of the vacant land Sussex County owns. I propose that there be a family center placed there. It would be an advantage for all.

The family center would help keep our youth off the streets. The youth could enjoy the arcade, take a swim or get in shape in the wieght room. The adult and Senior Citizens can drop the little ones off at the day care and go enjoy crafts or a smack at the snack bar. There will be more job opportunities for the unemployed.

With a small rise in our taxes we can make a safe and Sucessable place for all ages. I hope you take this into Consideration. Thank you for your time.

Suggestion that might improve student writing:

- elaborate and develop issues in the second paragraph ("There will be more job opportunities")

Comments:

In addition to an introduction and closing, this focused response contains numerous specific details outlining the advantages of using the land for a family center ("keep our youth off the streets"). Elaboration is minimal ("enjoy the arcade, take a swim, or get in shape in the weight room"). Several kinds of errors in standard written English ("To who it may concern" and "I have learn") are evident.

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Score Point 3

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter in response to what you should do with the county-owned land to best benefit the whole community. I feel that the best way to use the land is to make it a park. The park would consist of a baseball field, basketball courts, tennis courts, a playground, and an area with lots of trees that people can just walk through. There would be something for everyone in the community to do. If you want something to benefit the whole community, a park is what you should turn the land into.

The first reason why I feel that a park would be the best solution is because it would make the community look nicer and probably actually be nicer. It would give the community a touch of nature. Kids may would it cold to the beauty of the community, but the trees would take most pollution out of the air and put more oxygen in it. So therefore the air would be better also.

Another reason I feel this is because children can just go to the park and play. There would be a playground for parents to take their kids to and play with them. For the older kids there would be a baseball field, basketball court, and tennis courts. It would be a good place for them to go if they get bored instead of walking around the streets. It might keep kids out of trouble also because they would be in the park playing baseball or basketball or tennis instead of walking around looking for something to do.

The last reason I feel that turning that land into a park would be the best choice is because it would be a great stress reliever. After a hard day at work people could just come and take a walk in the park. People could take their kids or dogs for walks in the park also. People could also sit in the park and read a book or just sit in the park.

All in all I think that a park would be the best addition our community could have. It would be a peaceful place that everyone could enjoy. A park would be the perfect place for people to go as a family outings or individual people to go to get away from their troubles. Either way, a park is the best way to benefit the whole community.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- in paragraphs three and four, rather than repeating the issues of playing and walking, the writer should expand on the benefits of other aspects of the park
- focus on more vivid word choice

Comments:

This well-constructed response has a strong introduction, body, and conclusion. Varied sentence structure and effective transitions ("All in all...") move the piece along. Numerous specific details are evident but need more elaboration. In many instances repetition of details replaces strong development.

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Score Point 4

To whom it may concern,

Recently, I was made aware that the county is ready to develop the land located in the middle of Smalltown. The town is very excited, and is ready to submit its plans to construct a new Community Center. This proposed center plans to have an open floor for community events, a new playground, and an olympic sized pool. There is no center like this within the county, and we would be happy to have it here in Smalltown. We see four major benefits which the center would bring to the community. Recent accidents involving children in the roads will decrease. The closure of the Metalworks plant put many out of work, and this will create new jobs. The pool will give those less fortunate a chance to cool off in the hot summer months. Finally, the center will help to open new lines of communication through the town. These all make our town better.

As you know, Smalltown has had numerous problems with the commuters who travel through our town to get to Miami. These drivers speed through our town, and cause many accidents. This year alone, we have already had seven children killed by hit and run drivers. This number is unprecedented, and is a blemish to our town. The proposed playground gives our children a safe place to play without the hazards of reckless drivers.

The closure of the Metalworks distributing plant hurt our town tremendously. Seventy two citizens were put out of work. Our proposed center would add additional twenty four full time jobs, and thirty two part-time jobs. Our town is not the wealthiest of towns, but we know that we need these jobs.

Many people in the town are in a low to middle income bracket. Not all of these people have the money to pay for a membership to a pool. Here in the south, when it gets hot, many fathers get together and open a fire hydrant for the children to play in. This is unsafe for our families. The proposed olympic sized pool will accomadate many of these families looking for a fun and safe way to "beat the heat."

Finally, we feel that this center will improve this community tremendously. At one time, this was a very close knit community. Everyone knew each other and the town prospered. This is what we are striving to bring back. We want to open new lines of communication, and make this community the best it can be. If this center is built, it will be directly in the middle of town and could serve as a magnet to draw people together. Please review this plan, and we hope you see that this center will return to you what you have given it: A chance to succeed.

Suggestions that might improve student writing:

- work on proofreading skills
- explore various strategies that promote a more distinctive style and voice

Comments:

This response is unified with smooth transitions and fully elaborated specific details. The vivid and precise word choice promotes the effectiveness of the piece. There are minor errors in grammar, punctuation, and spelling but not enough to adversely affect the score.

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